



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION
FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**
Celebrating 27 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

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November 8, 2011

To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Patricia Curry, Chair 
Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families

**RE: TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AT THE EDMUND D. EDELMAN
CHILDREN'S COURT**

The Commission for Children and Families has been advised that your Honorable Board is contemplating a change in funding for the shuttle transportation service at the Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court.

We on the Commission would like to add our collective voice to that of Judge Nash in stating our strong advocacy for retaining the funding structure, as is, and thereby preserving your Board's endorsement for the provision of adequate shuttle service, which was established when the building plans for the court were first being drawn.

The Commission is concerned that eliminating the shuttle or changing its funding to a source that may be subject to future downgrading could severely inhibit the ability of vital interested parties to attend court hearings and thus jeopardize positive outcomes for potential reunifications, adoptions and best placement practice for dependents and wards of the court. Added to that dismaying prospect, and running counter to the original intent of the concept for a Children's Court, is the needless stress that will be placed on many families and caretakers of limited means who do make the effort to attend court hearings.

During the early days of court planning, there was a primary focus on supporting families whose lives are greatly impacted by the court experience which, in turn, affects their attitudes, efforts and the desire to comply with a system that may be perceived as either for you or against you. From the planning stages of the courthouse, there was a recognition that shuttle services would be required because of the difficult accessibility to the site selected for the courthouse. There was an agreement by those involved that the shuttle service would remain low-cost or free to families, as long as the children's courthouse remained at this site. For this reason, the shuttle service to connect bus riders up the steep hill, provision of low-cost food, a bright, cheerful lobby and other aspects of a family-friendly environment were all part of the commitment which was wholeheartedly embraced by your Board. That commitment has proven to be very successful; there are few if any altercations and like disturbances which mar other county courts.

If an effort to alter or eliminate shuttle funding is envisioned, I am requesting that the Commission be represented on an appropriate discussion group to consider alternative solutions that are consistent with our long-held obligations to the principles of our Children's Court.

PC:na

c: Chief Executive Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Interim Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Director, Department of Mental Health
Chief Probation Officer
County Counsel
Children's Deputies
Health Deputies
Justice Deputies
Honorable Michael Nash, Presiding Judge, Los Angeles Juvenile Court